



Rebuild Iowa Task Force Records Retention Meeting Notes

Governor Chet Culver
Lt. Governor Patty Judge, RIO Executive Director

**October 20, 2008 – 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Iowa Department for the Blind, Assembly Room
Fourth and Watson Powell Drive, Des Moines, IA 50309**

Task Force Members Present:

Karris Golden, Waterloo, Task Force Chair
Amy Groskopf, Davenport Public Library, Davenport
Gordon Hendrickson, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Des Moines
Senator Wally Horn, Iowa General Assembly, Cedar Rapids
Nancy Kraft, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City
Joan McCalmant, Linn County, Cedar Rapids
Nancy Parrott, Jasper County, Newton
Hilary Seo, Iowa State University Library, Ames
Lorna Truck, Library Consultant, West Des Moines
Mary Wegner, State Library of Iowa, Des Moines
Tanya Zanish-Belcher, Iowa State University, Ames

Resource Group Members Present:

Cyndi Pederson, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Des Moines
Tom Shepherd, Iowa Department of Administrative Services, Des Moines
David Vestal, Iowa State Association of Counties, Des Moines

Staff:

Aaron Todd, RIO
Ben Banowetz , SPPG
Brooke Findley , SPPG
Michelle Rich , SPPG

Welcome and Opening Comments

Golden welcomed the members back to the second meeting of the Records Retention Task Force and thanked them for their hard work on the subject. Golden explained the role of the work of the Records Retention Task Force in the process of developing the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission's (RIAC) 120-Day Report to the Governor.

Introductions and Member News and Updates From Around the State

Nancy Kraft of The University of Iowa Libraries updated the group on the organization's progress since the floods. Some floors are still not in use. The Libraries are currently assessing their book collections and using lamps due to limited lighting. Kraft noted that she was sent to provide on-the-ground assistance to the African American Museum and Czech and Slovak

National Heritage Museum in Cedar Rapids following the floods. The Libraries will soon be receiving paper materials to assess and recover.

Mary Wegner of the State Library of Iowa explained impacts to area libraries. Massive damages were incurred to the Cedar Rapids and New Hartford libraries. There continues to be major unresolved issues in Cedar Rapids. One primary issue is the actual use of the library building. They still do not know when they can move back in. Much of the collection has been damaged and no funding has been found for replacing these items. Additionally, rental space is very costly. Rental cost for the library is upwards of \$166,000 per year. This is an expense that was not budgeted, and is expected to be a three-year cost.

Amy Groskopf of the Davenport Public Library explained that their library had not been damaged in these recent disasters; however, they are aware that it could happen any time. It is important that all libraries, regardless of impact from this year's disasters, need to be planning for emergencies and learning from the experiences of libraries this past summer.

Findley provided an overview of the process for developing the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission's 120-Day Report to the Governor.

Progress Reports

Todd updated the group on Rebuild Iowa Office activities. Todd reviewed the Commission's vision: A resilient Iowa that will be safe, sustainable and economically strong, reaffirming its ties to the land, rivers, environment, and rich cultural history. The Rebuild Iowa Office is working closely with ESF 14 in 10 communities statewide: Oakville, Iowa City, Coralville, Cedar Rapids, Palo, Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Waverly, New Hartford, and Parkersburg. Records retention has been at the table at all these discussions. Three communities are going through an intensive process. Julie Struck of RIO is working with case management committees called Long-term Recovery Committees. The lead agency, the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (DHRC), is a coalition of organizations that provide structure to help communities and individuals recover from disasters, help with preparedness planning and long-term recovery. This council acts as the statewide volunteer response organization. If Iowa did not have this entity, the state would be served by the general FEMA structure. There are currently 13 committees providing assistance to families and communities, and another 10 communities are being served directly by the DHRC.

More than 1,500 infrastructure projects, totaling more than \$300 million, have been approved. Levies are being built, and water and sewage treatment projects are being repaired. Iowa saved \$150 million in state funds by showing the Federal government the state's significant need and thus achieving a 90/10 federal to state match. More than 3,000 small business loans have been approved to date for a total of \$230 million. Through Department of Labor grants the state of Iowa has helped 10,000 people by extending unemployment insurance at no cost to any Iowa employer. A total of \$1.1 billion has been dedicated statewide to begin the rebuilding process.

Iowa now has \$85 million available from federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in addition to the \$40 million dedicated to the Jumpstart program. There is also another round of funding coming from HUD shortly. In addition, a \$23 billion package was passed the week of October 1 by Congress that will help states facing daunting disaster recovery.

There are three housing assistance programs available through the Jumpstart program. To qualify, homeowners must be registered with FEMA. The maximum award is \$72,000 and all

loans are forgivable over 10 years. Regional Councils of Government and Entitlement Cities are distributing program funds locally.

Businesses and nonprofits are eligible for a forgivable loan of up to \$55,000 so long as the entity reopens within one year of receiving the loan. Eligible businesses and nonprofits are those that sustained physical damage or economic loss as a result of the disasters. Entities must have been approved for an SBA loan or other private loan, and are eligible for the lesser of up to 25% of that loan amount or \$50,000. An additional \$5,000 is available to cover costs associated with the purchase and installation of eligible energy efficiency improvements.

Gordon Hendrickson of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) provided an update on the Department's activities since the disasters. Hendrickson noted that because the DCA is not a regulatory agency, the Department relies on voluntary reporting to develop impact reports. The archival side of the voluntary reporting has been small. Even if the Department is provided this information, it does not have the capacity to do anything to support organizations that have suffered damages. Hendrickson suggested the Task Force needs to ensure that the DCA is provided sufficient resources for long-term emergency response and recovery capacity. In addition, the Task Force needs to make sure that organizations will not need to report to multiple places with this damage information.

Hendrickson asked the Task Force to think of records retention broadly in their discussions, making sure to include library collections. These are still vital resources needed to sustain the state's cultural heritage.

Hendrickson explained that the Department's impact assessments had not changed significantly since the last Task Force meeting. The Department has made emergency funds available to organizations and institutions, including funds for stabilization of historic buildings and collections. At the last Task Force meeting the group talked about the historical preservation grants that are capped at two per county. This cap still stands for emergency funds, as well. The Department has made some efforts to get grant dollars out as fast and as widely as possible.

Many organizations with damage to their records were government bodies. These entities have worked through the appropriate federal avenues to protect and recover their records. In Linn County the records were frozen and now they must secure funds to ensure that these records are recovered sufficiently. Local officials are dedicated to their work and know what must be done, but do not always have the capacity to do this work. The Task Force needs to be focused on training people in private organizations to make sure that they are as well equipped as possible to respond to disasters. Disasters aren't always as significant as the disasters experienced this spring statewide. Sometimes a disaster for records-retaining entities is as simple as a burst pipe in winter. As records-retaining entities move forward, it must be ensured that there exists consistent training for new positions, newly elected local officials, and volunteers.

The Department of Cultural Affairs is currently working with the Iowa Conservation and Preservation Consortium on connecting collections with experts to develop disaster response plans. One of the critical components of disaster preparedness is coordinating with local emergency response. Cultural organizations and institutions need to make sure that these emergency response people know of the cultural institutions in their communities. Emergency responders must be educated on the value of our records so that, for instance, these responders do not turn on the sprinklers full-force if there is a fire in a records-holding organization or institution.

The Task Force discussed the need for a central repository of microfilm. Some members noted that they had off-site storage, but still struggle with deciding the most durable or easy to use medium. Task Force members suggested the need to communicate best practices on the appropriate storage techniques and mediums among records-keeping entities. This technology is changing so rapidly that it has been hard to determine the best approach to long-term storage. The Task Force discussed the challenges of using microfiche and compact discs for records retention. Currently Iowa Code only specifies that records must be saved on a “durable medium.” There is no consensus on what this medium is or should be.

Task Force Issues Review

Findley reviewed the recommendations from the last Records Retention Task Force. Findley reviewed the RIAC’s recommendations in its 45-Day Report. Findley made it clear that this meeting of the Task Force is meant to provide visionary recommendations and strategies for long-term recovery.

New Issues

The group did not identify any new issues.

Identify Priority Issues for Achieving Long Term Recovery

The needs of libraries were discussed. Libraries need support in disaster response and recovery much like records-keeping entities and cultural organizations. A Task Force member noted that the longer the time that passes without library collections getting replaced, the more likely that the collections will never be replaced. The Task Force agreed that libraries were important in their discussions.

Noted was the increasing need for support in paying for rental storage for public libraries and other records-keeping entities. A Task Force member noted that the Cedar Rapids Public Library is currently operating out of the shopping mall and is in need of more space. People need more space to access the resources that a library provides, such as computers for homework and to submit employment applications. Difficulties arise out of FEMA designating such storage space as “non-essential.” The Task Force discussed the need for a long-term mechanism for supporting libraries and collections, such as a system to set up collections to be digitized, as well as providing some assurance of continuity of operations. These entities need operations funding and facilities rental assistance and support.

The Task Force discussed revising the manual for city, county, and state officials regarding the importance of records and ensuring vital records and other collections are safe and protected from disasters. Task Force members noted that the manual needs updating. It was suggested that incentives be researched that would motivate cities and counties to maintain better records. Some local entities do not place a significant emphasis on record-keeping, and this could ultimately be very damaging.

The Task Force discussed the importance of educating individual citizens and households about maintaining personal records in the home.

A Task Force member suggested recommending the creation of a meta-data repository that lists all the records, where they exist, what they contain, and what form they are in. Researchers would know where to go and archivists would be given more guidance on long-term planning. There also needs to be risk-assessment undertaken that would lead to developing a plan regarding ideal formats and developing statewide standards. The Task Force also discussed the

need for a digital repository in which the actual record would exist in perpetuity in PDF file format. If there are standards, there could be a central database that everyone could access. The group discussed incentives for utilizing best practices.

The need for Cadastral maps of the state was discussed.

Strategies to Accomplish Long Term Recovery

Findley asked the group to consider strategies for recovery in the following areas:

- Infrastructure Planning
- Emergency Planning and Response
- Communication and Education
- Recovery Technology/Continuity of Operations

Infrastructure Planning

- Establish best practices for all records retention and management with a focus on new technologies (digital, electronic).
- Do not build in floodplains. Mitigating risk when making citing decisions for new buildings.
- Create a meta-data repository to collect information on records statewide.
- Create a trusted digital repository for statewide repository of digital records.
- Conduct quality risk assessments for existing records repositories. This information could be used to identify best practices. These best practices must then be implemented, perhaps through the use of incentives.

Emergency Planning and Response

- Create cultural response teams for disaster response. Teams would include conservators, cultural experts and archivists for response to disasters to cultural and records institutions. A mechanism is needed for the deployment and accessing of the response teams. Resources currently exist, but are not coordinated currently and mechanism does not exist to coordinate resources in times of disasters. Sites must be identified statewide to set up temporary storage that would be ready to house records and collections at the times of disasters.
- Records repositories must be included in county and state emergency response plans. Records managers should be included in the county and state response teams.
- Conduct regular and consistent GIS mapping of records repositories.
- Create a Cadastral map of the state that can be used for planning and emergency response.
- Create statewide disaster response plan and include records component in the plan. A part of this plan would include a disaster response directory providing contact information on resources that are available at the time of an emergency or disaster.

Communication and Education

- Create a training program for records management for individuals and organizations. This training could include disaster planning and response, value of records in communities and for individuals, intergovernmental preparedness, vital operating records, and standards for records retention. Resources need to be attached to this training program to ensure its sustainability.
- Develop a formalized public awareness campaign on the value of records and why records need to be maintained, as well as individual records retention. Public and policymaker education needs to occur as to why collections and records need to be recovered. The importance and value of public and cultural records needs to be

communicated. Information also needs to be communicated to records entities and the public regarding resources available for cultural emergencies.

- A collaborative effort needs to be initiated to update the Retention Manual. For long-term recovery, the manual must be continually updated and revised. The Manual needs to address standards that have yet to be established.

Recovery Technology/Continuity of Operations

- Create a mechanism for state assistance for reestablishment of operations for public libraries and record repositories, including, but not limited to, temporary rental costs and collection replacement.
- Create an incentive structure for those entities implementing best practices. This incentive should be monetary to be most effective.
- Create a system to digitize city and county records, as well as unique cultural records.
- Develop a redundant records system that would provide continuity of operations at times of disasters. This would be a mirror site that would provide access to all records during times of disasters.

The Task Force asked that culture and records be included as a component of all the recommendations of the Commission's 120-Day Report. The Task Force voiced the need to include culture and records along with the other issue areas covered in the Commission's discussions. Many people do not connect with records; culture connects more with the public.

Final Comments

Golden thanked the Task Force for the time they had devoted to this process in total. Golden promised that RIO staff would ensure that the communication to the Commission reflected the discussion of the day. The notes will be the single product from each Task Force. The Task Force notes will then go in to developing the Task Force Report provided to the Commission in the next few weeks.